

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

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R 081325Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6184

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, IN, US

SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER GANDHI CHARGES INDIAN OCEAN

BUILD UP AGGRAVATES TENSIONS

1. SPEAKING AT A BANQUET IN HONOR OF VISITING MAURITIAN
PRIME MINISTER RANGOOLAM ON JAN 7, PRIME MINISTER INDIRA
GANDHI CRITICIZED MILITARY ACTIVITY IN THE INDIAN OCEAN.
MRS. GANDHI SAID (QUOTE) "MAURITIUS AND INDIA SHARE A COM-
MON OUTLOOK TOWARDS INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS. WE ARE BOTH
MEMBERS OF THE NON-ALIGNED COMMUNITY AND OUR OBJECTIVE
HAS BEEN TO FOSTER PEACE AND FRIENDLY COOPERATION AMONG
NATIONS. BUT AS INHABITANTS OF THE INDIAN OCEAN NEIGHBOUR-
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HOOD, WE ARE BOTH CONCERNED AT RECENT DEVELOPMENTS WHICH

HAVE CAST A SHADOW OVER THIS AREA. MILITARY BASES HAVE BEEN EXPANDED AND MASSIVE & POWERFUL FLEETS AND ARMAMENTS HAVE BEEN INDUCTED. THESE HAVE AGGRAVATED TENSIONS AT A TIME OF MOUNTING CRISIS IN WEST ASIA AND GROWING ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES ALL OVER THE WORLD. IT IS HEARTENING THAT A STATESMAN OF YOUR VISION AND EXPERIENCE HAS SPOKEN OUT SO FORTHRIGHTLY ON THIS ISSUE. TOGETHER WITH OUR OTHER FRIENDS IN THIS REGION, WE SHOULD SPARE NO EFFORT TO REITERATE OUR RESOLVE TO LIVE IN PEACE AND TO DEVELOP OUR RESOURCES AND OUR COMMERCIAL AND ECONOMIC EXCHANGES ON A JUST AND EQUITABLE BASIS. WE DO NOT WANT TO BE DRAWN INTO ANY NEW INTERNATIONAL POWER CONFLICT, FOR THAT CAN LEAD ONLY TO INCALCULABLE DISASTER." (END QUOTE)

2. THE MAURITIAN PRIME MINISTER IN HIS RESPONSE DID NOT MENTION THE SITUATION IN THE INDIAN OCEAN. EARLIER IN THE DAY, HOWEVER, HE REPORTEDLY TOLD NEWSMEN THAT MAURITIUS WAS IN FULL AGREEMENT WITH INDIA THAT THE INDIAN OCEAN BE STRICTLY MAINTAINED AS A ZONE OF PEACE AND ALL STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN TO AVOID BIG POWER RIVALRY IN THE REGION.

3. MRS. GANDHI'S REMARKS ARE VARIATIONS ON A STANDARD GOI THEME, BUT SHE OBVIOUSLY FEELS STRONGLY ENOUGH ABOUT A US PRESENCE TO KEEP THE MATTER ON THE FRONT PAGES. NEW ACCOUNTS SAY SHE HAS ALREADY RAISED THE MATTER WITH RECENT LITTORAL STATE VISITORS, AND WILL BE TALKING TO OTHERS -- BAHRAIN, TANZANIA AND ZAMBIA IN THE COMING WEEKS. WE HAVE NO INDICATION THAT SHE OR THE GOI IS ATTEMPTING TO EVOLVE ANY NEW APPROACH.
SCHNEIDER

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